

School Committee Meeting Minutes
Lura A. White School
December 8, 2003

Present: Donald Parker, Chairperson
Bob Prescott
Hugh Muffoletto
Gary Bourassa
Paul Wilson

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent
Lonnie Ouellette, Early Learning Coordinator
Suzanne Mahoney, Elementary Principal

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Participation:

Committee members have received questions from parents regarding student attendance at the 5th grade “tide pool” assembly if fee wasn’t paid. Dr. Scott said students would attend regardless of payment. A question was also asked about refunds for the Washington, D.C. trip. This was discussed at the parent information meeting with Peter Capodagli. Dr. Scott stated that if a parent should have a question of this nature to contact the principal for clarification.

The grandmother of a FLLAC student at Devens was present to discuss her family’s concern of the lack a nurse for several days. Her grandchild has medical conditions that require a medical staff member to be present at all times in the event he should develop a seizure. The family asked that they be notified whenever there is no medical staff available so that they may determine if it is in the best interest of the child to send him to school.

Mrs. Ouellette expressed that if there should ever be a question of the severity of any medical condition or seizure there are several responders, namely the classroom teacher who is very experienced, a Kindergarten teacher who is a trained EMT, and Devens Fire Department which is across the street and would be at the school at a moments notice. Mrs. Ouellette stated that the lack of medical staff stemmed from the hiring of a nurse who later backed out of the position. Mrs. Ouellette felt confident that having Devens Fire Department within close proximity would be adequate emergency medical coverage while her search for a candidate continued. In the meantime there is continuous substitute nursing coverage at Devens. The family will be notified if there is no nursing coverage at Devens. The child’s family is satisfied that everything is being done to ensure that the child is being taken care of.

As there was no additional public participation the committee moved on to discuss old business. The minutes for the November 25, 2003 meeting were reviewed. Motion was made by Mr. Muffoletto to approve the minutes. Motioned was seconded by Mr. Bourassa and approved.

The Math Action Plan, which was presented at a previous meeting, included a component where a committee would be established to review commercial math programs to determine which would be most beneficial to the Shirley School District, grades K-5. Suzanne Mahoney, Elementary Principal, led the committee and presented her findings to the School Committee.

Over the past two months a math consultant has been hired, math manipulatives were ordered for those classrooms that were lacking, several Professional Development math workshops were held and several publishing companies made presentations to the staff. After a unanimous decision, Addison Wesley is the math program recommended. The Shirley School District would receive the 2004 edition and teachers would begin implementing the program in January, blending it with the current Mathland program. This new program will provide a better foundation for the grade 6-8 Connected Math program. By FY05, the Addison Wesley program should be used in its entirety. Quarterly assessment tests will be given, starting in January, in an effort to measure the success of this new program.

The cost of this program will be \$21,478.25, including approximately \$19,000 worth of "free" material. Funding will come from the budget reserve.

A motion was made by Mr. Wilson to approve the new math program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muffoletto and approved.

Meeting was adjourned to attend the School Building Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The committee reconvened at 7:50 and discussed the second reading of the School Use Policy. If the custodians find a problem with the condition of the gymnasiums it will be reported to the principal who will then report the situation to the superintendent. Dr. Scott and Patricia Stern will then contact the organization and could possibly prohibit their usage of the facility. It was suggested that a refundable security deposit be imposed on organizations which we have experienced problems. The security deposit could be equal to the custodians fee for the day and would be classified under the rent and fees portion of the policy.

Mr. Wilson motioned to approve the policy. Motion was seconded by Mr. Muffoletto and approved.

Dr. Scott discussed School Budget information, focusing first on student enrollment. He presented the committee with an 8 year history of enrollment of grades PK-12, as well as a projection for FY05. Dr. Scott stated that the high school students are the most difficult to project pointing that an astonishing number of our freshman students went to Nashoba Technical High School this year.

Dr. Scott then went on to discuss the expenditures and revenues for the school over the last 10 years. The expenditures have grown dramatically over the years, especially Schedule 19. The expenditure report includes donations received from Bemis, as well as state grants which have decreased this year. Also reflected is the Devens lease of \$100,000 which has been broken down into two payments of \$50,000 to be paid this year and next. After FY05, there will not be a cost to lease Devens.

The next item on the list, the Capital Plan, was then discussed. The Capital Plan reflects what was actually expended on capital projects through the current year as well as what money is projected for future years. In FY04 we plan to expend carryover money of approximately \$13,000. Several projects are planned for next year, including an engineering study for ventilation work in the 1950's building and a study to remodel the LAW kitchen. Money will be expended in FY06 for the actual work. Continuation of electrical work at Center school will also take place. Cosmetic work at LAW and technology upgrades will require money to be expended over a multi-year time frame.

The money for playing field upgrades at SMS may not be necessary as Devens/Mass Development may be the responsible party.

A motion was made by Mr. Bourassa to approve the Capital Plan so it may be given to the Finance Committee for discussion. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved.

Permanent occupancy of the Shirley Middle School was discussed. Dr. Scott informed the members that all of the electrical work in the technology room has been done and we are just waiting for an inspection to be done. The inspector has been notified. Work on the auditorium still needs to be done. All parties involved with the auditorium are working on the specifics to have it completed soon.

The Mid-Cycle MCAS Report was reviewed by Dr. Scott. Under the No Child Left Behind federal law a progress assessment is required every two years. This mid-cycle report uses MCAS results and, with a compilation of previous years' data, determines if adequate progress has been made. Shirley students from 1999 – 2003 as a whole have made AYP progress every year. This year the report broke down the student body into sub-groups and reflected that SPED has not made adequate progress. The high population of SPED students within the district may be the reason for this score. It is believed that more resources are needed to help increase the results of the SPED students. Even with added resources the goal may be hard to achieve as the state will continue to increase the standard each year until a 100% proficiency level is achieved.

The MASC is holding a conference on January 10 in Haverhill. It was suggested by Dr. Scott that the entire school committee attend as it would be an excellent opportunity to gather the same information and discuss it as a group. The committee agreed, suggesting that Tom Walsh, Sylvia Jordan and Suzanne Mahoney attend as well.

Discussion of the Executive Session will be held until January, 2004.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Karen Gutheil